

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system comprising:  
a plurality of fixedly mountable microphones; and  
circuits coupled to respective microphones including circuitry for evaluating intelligibility of audio received by the respective microphones and generating an indicator of intelligibility on a per microphone basis, the circuits each include a network output port.
2. A system as in claim 1 which includes a plurality of ambient condition detectors with at least some of microphones carried by respective ones of the detectors.
3. A system as in claim 2 where at least some of the circuits are carried by respective ones of the detectors coupled to respective microphones also carried by the same detector.
4. A system as in claim 1 which includes at least one audio output device which produces speech intelligibility test signals which will be received by the microphones.
5. A system as in claim 4 which includes control circuits coupled to the microphones and the audio output device, the control circuits couple electrical representations of the speech intelligibility test signals to the output device.
6. A system as in claim 5 which includes a plurality of audio output devices coupled to the control circuits.
7. A system as in claim 6 which includes a plurality of distributed ambient condition detectors.
8. A system as in claim 7 where at least some of the detectors carry respective ones of the microphones.

9. A system as in claim 5 where the control circuits include at least one of logic or executable instructions for producing speech intelligibility test signals to be audibly output by the at least one audio output device.
10. A system as in claim 9 which includes additional logic or executable instructions for processing the speech intelligibility test signals received from the respective microphones.
11. A method comprising:  
generating at least one speech intelligibility test signal;  
sensing the speech intelligibility test signal at least one fixed location;  
evaluating the intelligibility of the sensed speech intelligibility test signal.
12. A method as in claim 11 which includes generating a plurality of speech intelligibility test signals..
13. A method as in claim 11 which includes sensing the speech intelligibility test signal at a plurality of spaced apart, fixed locations.
14. A method as in claim 13 which includes:  
transmitting the sensed speech intelligibility test signal from the plurality of locations to a common site and then processing same to evaluate intelligibility thereof.
15. A method as in claim 14 where the processing at the common site includes visually presenting processing results.
16. A method as in claim 14 where the sensed speech intelligibility test signals receive initial processing prior to being coupled to the common site.
17. A method as in claim 16 with the initial processing conducted on a per location basis and where initially processed results are each indicative of intelligibility of received audio.

18. An apparatus comprising:  
at least one ambient condition sensor;  
control circuits coupled to the sensor;  
a microphone coupled to the control circuits, the control circuits establishing an intelligibility index in response to signal from the microphone.
19. An apparatus as in claim 18 which provides at least one port for connection of external microphones.
20. An apparatus as in claim 18 which includes a network communications port.
21. An apparatus as in claim 20 where the intelligibility index comprises at least one of STI, RASTI, SII, or, a subset of one of STI, RASTI, SII.
22. An apparatus as in claim 18 where the ambient condition sensor comprises at least one of a smoke sensor, a flame sensor, a thermal sensor or a gas sensor.
23. An apparatus as in claim 22 where the control circuits include a processor with logic or executable instructions for carrying out intelligibility index processing.
24. An apparatus as in claim 23 which includes a network communications port, the port facilitating coupling electrical energy to at least the control circuits, and coupling intelligibility indices at least from the control circuits to a medium.
25. An apparatus as in claim 24 where the communications port includes an interface for carrying out bi-directional communication via a medium.
26. An apparatus as in claim 25 where the interface includes circuits coupled to at least one of an electrical cable or an optical cable.
27. An apparatus comprising:

a microphone with an electrical output corresponding to incident audio;  
control circuits coupled to the microphone, the control circuits implement intelligibility processing in connection with incident audio; and  
a network communications port coupled to the control circuits.

28. An apparatus as in claim 27 which includes a housing attachable to a mounting surface.

29. A system comprising:  
a plurality of networkable microphones;  
at least one processor for carrying out speech index processing responsive to audio incident on at least one of the microphones.

30. A system as in claim 29 which includes a plurality of processors, each member of the plurality is coupled to and receives audio input signals from a respective microphone.

31. A system as in claim 30 where each member of the plurality carries out speech intelligibility processing of received audio.